



## **DFBA AGM**

**4<sup>th</sup> December 2014.**

### **Secretary's Report**

#### **Dear Members and Friends,**

It is my pleasant duty to report another successful year for DFBA Community Enterprises Ltd and its affiliated sub groups. Despite the difficult economic environment that involved high unemployment, involuntary emigration, reduced incomes, high personal, bank and sovereign debt, reduced services and increased taxes, great credit is due to the loyalty and commitment of the volunteers in the DFBA groups for continuing to improve so many areas of community life. Over 200 volunteers are engaged in DFBA projects supported by full time and part- time staff members. 2014 was difficult in terms of funding projects and new start ups.

Major restructuring was carried out in local government and state agencies during the year. It was a difficult time for these organisations to concentrate on servicing community enterprise needs. Waterford city and county councils officially amalgamated in June following 12 months of intense preparation and restructuring. Town councils in Tramore, Dungarvan and Lismore were abolished. The Local Enterprise Offices were established. The future of Leader was the source of ongoing speculation. The final operational structure has yet to be confirmed. The next round of EU funding is due to come on stream during first half of 2015.

Despite the difficult environment little support funding available DFBA made significant progress in wide range of areas. This progress is summarized over the following 12 pages and is a tribute to all involved both volunteers and staff members.

## **Summary of Developments**

### **Employment**

Currently there are 25 small businesses employing 60 people in the ecopark with 20 additional linked jobs in the community

DREL attracted new businesses into the ecopark in 2014 with some due to open for production in early 2015. These include Pure Food Ltd, Flavourhaus Ltd, Scuba4you, Trish's

Honey Products, Kiely Meats and Javier Garduno. Noel Whelan made a welcome return to his workshop during the year. Something Sweet relocated to the city.

**Anne Valley Angling** officially opened on 1<sup>st</sup> March with 2 employees. Most of the year was spent developing the complex and stocking it with a variety of fish. The project is ready to operate to full capacity from start of 2015 season.

**DREL/Education Centre** contracted 3 additional Tús workers in 2014 to help complete projects, providing them with invaluable work experience and the possibility of a return to full or part time employment in the mainstream economy.

**Fenor National School** is currently accommodating Hibernia College Dublin's 2 years Primary Teacher Training Programme. Eight adult students have enrolled and it is now in its second year. The accommodation of such a prestigious programme in the area is to be welcomed.

**Fenor Developments** employ 3 Community Employment Scheme workers under the Mahon Valley Scheme who maintain and continuously improve the village (earned improved marks in Tidy Towns 2014), the school, church, graveyard, Fenor Bog and play park and other areas. Tús will provide one worker for the Fenor after school childcare from January 2015. The contribution of Tús and CES workers is fully appreciated by the community.

**New Jobs 2014-** Eight new commercial jobs Anne Valley Angling, Flavourhaus, Pure Food Ltd, Trish's Honey Products and Scuba4you plus two Tús new supported employment positions were created / accommodated in 2014.

There is the prospect of a further 10 new jobs in 2015 with Kiely Meats and Javier Garduno + an additional Tús worker employed by Fenor Childcare. If additional quality space was available that figure could be exceeded.

### **Funding Secured in 2014**

**DREL** received two grants from Waterford City & County Council's Artisan Food Strategy Fund €16,000 and €30,000 to upgrade three units to food readiness standard. The capital investment was welcome and helped accommodate three new businesses.

**Waterford City & County Council** is completing a structural strengthening job on the Boatstrand Pier wall at a cost of €300,000 which is a welcome development.

**DFBA** -Donal Lehane sourced a €3,000 grant from Leader for the training of the local Dunhill-Fenor First Response Team led by Brendan Groves. Over 50 local people have completed 4 hour training sessions in the past 6 weeks. There are 6 defibrillators located in different areas of the parish. The service is very important and is a matter of life or death for people with a heart condition waiting for an ambulance to arrive.

**Sponsorship/Advertising:** The sum of €1,600 was raised in sponsorship and advertisements for the DREL produced DFBA Local Business Directory

**Fenor fund raising** continued to exceed expectations and once again the Christmas Sale of Work, Cycling Fun Day and Halloween Extravaganza were very successful. Fenor Committee accommodated Dunhill Community Hall in hosting a raffle for the hall project in their Barn Dance event in August realising €3,000. The community also run bingo every three weeks during winter months which is very successful. The final bingo night of the year is a Christmas special on 12<sup>th</sup> December. Well done to John Hayes, Dan Cowman, Pat Greene and Stan Flynn DFBA directors and their team of workers.

**Dunhill Community Hall** fund raising continued throughout the year with a number of very successful events including Parish Draw, Pub Quiz, Winter Warmer Draw, Fenor Barn Dance raffle and Summer Barbeque. Current funds exceed €70,000. An information leaflet was circulated in the autumn with up to date income and expenditure statement included.

### **Free Third Level and Professional Consultancy Support**

**Dublin City University** deployed a full-time professional research worker Michael McGagh to Dunhill Ecopark Centre for six months from 1<sup>st</sup> February to 31<sup>st</sup> July.

**University of Michigan** is sending a professor and MBA team to study DREL/ DFBA/ Copper Coast and produce report on future sustainability options. The programme is funded by an Irish-American Philanthropic Foundation. It is a six week project with two weeks located in the area.

**University of Puget Sound, Washington DC** famed for its commitment to social justice worldwide is considering a research & development project with DREL in 2015.

**Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT)** indicated strong interest in working with DREL on a number of projects including Food Hub, masters and PhD Research Projects and other regional related economic and social projects.

**Limerick IT, Athlone IT and GMIT** are currently working with DREL on the Communities Creating Jobs Project (CCJ).

**Dr Alp Turkmen** former strategic director of a Microsoft Division has joined DREL in a voluntary capacity as ‘**International Business Ambassador**’ to promote Dunhill Ecopark as a prime location for micro foreign direct investment. He is promoting it with multi-nationals and universities abroad with the aim of gaining international involvement and support.

**John Higgins**, political policy advisor and EU lobbyist has agreed to work with DREL/DFBA in a voluntary capacity in 2015.

**Kevin Barton Geophysicist** (Mayo) led a local team organised by Tina Keating and Emily Shakespeare and completed a geophysical study on Dunhill Castle grounds during heritage

week, August 23rd, 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. Following the publication of a report on the study the intention is to examine the feasibility of completing archaeological and medieval historical research and unearth further interesting information on the origins and history of the castle, the home of Waterford Powers.

**Dr Rory Harrington** local scientist and ecologist is completing the ‘Anne River Window Project’ in the village wetlands. It is an educational and environmental project of interest to young and old. Interested parties will be able to view and study river bed activity and its unique ecosystem.

**Tina Keating Geologist** produced a substantial collage of photos on the history of the Copper Coast Geopark and presented it to DREL for display in the Education Centre lobby. Many thanks go to Tina for her generosity in contributing her time, materials and professional input and to Jim Morrissey (Builder) for providing the labour and additional materials.

**Evidence based submissions-** It has become very clear in dealing with government departments and agencies that any request for funding support has to be accompanied by strong, credible evidence. The backing of reputable national/ international research based organisations and political support can also help. Even then there is no guarantee of a positive response not to mention money.

### **External Recognition**

**Fenor Playpark won a special five star award** – only one of two playparks from total of 850 locations to win this prestigious award. RoSPA is a UK based engineering quality assurance body and is contracted to carry out audits on playparks in Ireland and UK. This recognition is a great tribute to all those involved in the development of the playpark. The numbers using the facility are continually increasing and it is a great success story.

**Anne Valley Walk achieved full marks** - following an inspection by National Trails Office/ Irish Sports Council in August 2014 it gained 100% in each of the 7 marking sections and under 38 different headings which was a brilliant achievement. Credit to Willie Moore and Anne Valley Farmers Group and Helen Kavanagh and trails team for this outstanding result.

**Cian Hawes** of Pure Food Ltd a client company in the Ecopark won the ‘**RTE Blooms Garden of the Year**’ in 2014. His garden was later displayed at the autumn Blooms Garden Festival in Phoenix Park.

**John Hayes** was invited to display his carving skills at the National Ploughing Championship in Ratheniska Co Laois by an Italian company OLEO-Mac (Camsaw Group Irl). John crafted a ploughman with horses and plough. Thousands of people visited his display area. Great credit to John and his team. John can be contacted at [specialbranchcarvings@gmail.com](mailto:specialbranchcarvings@gmail.com)

**Tina Keating mentored** the Tramore Stella Maris 5<sup>th</sup> Class ‘Kite Aerial Photography’ group which submitted the winning project on Dunhill Castle in the Heritage Wall Competition in Balla Co Mayo. The conference was opened by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny T.D. in April

2014 and attended by archaeologists and geophysicists from around Europe. This project is also displayed on the wall in the lobby of the Education Centre.

**Samantha Richardson** former manager of INTERREG HERULES project successfully completed an MSc in Social Enterprise-management with DCU Ryan Academy of Social Entrepreneurship in City West Business Park, Dublin. Samantha was nominated by DREL for the programme. The degree programme was funded by DCU Menter Ionach Nua INTERREG Project.

### **Achievements**

**A Local Business Directory was produced by DREL** and launched by Lar Power, 'Director of Enterprise' Waterford City & Co Council on 25<sup>th</sup> July. The directory was well received. It was sold for €3 per copy. 50% of the sales were allocated to DREL, 25% to Na Gaeil the local under age GAA club and 25% to Sean McKinley who cycled around the parish from door to door selling it. Credit to Tús employees Seamus Goggin, Calum Ryan and previous workers Willie O'Neill, Caitriona Casey, Deirdre Swaby and Sean McKinley for making a success of the project. Seamus Goggin and Sean are due to present a cheque for €250 to Na Gaeil juvenile GAA club next week.

**CCJ -Copper Coast Study Tour** -On Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September Dunhill Rural Enterprises Ltd in partnership with the GIFT (Green Innovation and Future Technologies) INTERREG Project in WIT organised a Communities Creating Jobs (CCJ) study tour of Copper Coast area. An invited party of 30 people represented third level education, community groups, national/local media, national/ local politicians and senior civil servants. The tour party assembled in Dunhill Ecopark and travelled to the Copper Coast HQ in Knockmahon where they were provided with refreshments. They received a presentation from John Galloway on the development of the Copper Coast.

They then travelled to Fenor Bog and Playpark where Stan Flynn made a presentation on Fenor Developments. On returning to Dunhill Ecopark they enjoyed two presentations on Dunhill Developments and Communities Creating Jobs. This was followed by a lunch in the Castle Café.

Minister for Rural Affairs Anne Phelan TD was unable to attend but arranged a meeting with DREL/CCJ in Dublin the following week. Overall both DREL and GIFT Project team were delighted with the turnout and interest. Borris / Blackstairs, Co. Carlow who were represented on the tour are planning to run a tour of their area in early 2015.

**A Global Investment Brief** was developed by DREL to attract micro enterprise foreign direct investment to the ecopark. It was supported and commended by Loyola Hearn recently retired Canadian Ambassador to Ireland, two former Microsoft strategy consultants, Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), Dublin City University (DCU), the GAA and Connect Ireland. <http://senan4.wix.com/global-investment->

**An extension to Anne Valley Walkway and Wildlife Sanctuary to Dunhill Castle** was opened on 8<sup>th</sup> August. Credit for the extension is due to the farmers group led by Willie Moore and the Recreation and Amenity Trails Programme supervised by Helen Kavanagh. Two new information boards and three flagpoles were erected in the castle grounds.

**Anne Valley Festival** was held on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> August. The aim was to organise a social event for families and fund raiser for the walkway. A range of activities was organised for the children and a highlight was the barbeque with roasted pig on spit. The counter recorded over 15,000 people completing the walk in 6 months. Credit to Willie Moore and his committee

**DREL/GIFT- WIT INTERREG Project** held a successful seminar in the Education Centre on 18<sup>th</sup> June with 91 people registering on the day. The seminar was run by Green Information and Future Technologies (GIFT), INTERREG Project in partnership with DREL / CCJ and was fully sponsored by GIFT/WIT Interreg Project.

**Copper Coast Geopark HQ** was officially opened by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD in November 2013. Minister for Sport and Tourism Leo Varadkar launched The Copper Coast Geopark Guide Map in January 2014.

**Copper Coast HQ** hosted its first wedding in September 2014 and has plans to develop and promote the location as a wedding venue for civil ceremonies.

**New Recreation Tourism Trails Programme** – A new programme offering a FETAC Major Award Level 5 in Tourism with Business began in September. It is great to see new faces around the place and the car park full. This programme followed on from the success of two previous pilot ‘Recreation and Amenity Trails programmes’ Helen Kavanagh and her team have excelled in successfully developing and managing the programme, the first of its kind in the country

**Julian Walton** launched his book ‘**On This Day**’ **Volume 2** on 7<sup>th</sup> November in the Book Centre in Waterford. The book was produced in collaboration with Frank O’Donoghue. Julian spent many days and weeks researching and writing in the Education Centre. The Centre staff members are acknowledged in the book for the assistance provided.

**Dunhill Multi-Education Centre** celebrated its 10th anniversary in on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> September. Over 100 people attended with lots of goodwill and publicity gained. A highlight was the children’s art competition with over 300 children participating from 7 local schools. Marie Cox and team had the centre looking its best for the occasion and the feedback from the attendance was very positive.

**John Hayes** DFBA director earned high praise for his imaginative carving of 3 angels from a tree trunk in Fenor Graveyard with a chainsaw. John is a gifted craftsman combining his hands head and heart. His outstanding work will become a premier landmark feature in years to come.

## **Elected/Appointed**

**Bernard Deegan** was elected as assistant secretary in 2014 which is a welcome step in ensuring a long term future for the organisation

**Marie Dolan** joined the board as a director to mark another important development. Many of our directors are long serving and some are elderly. The need to attract new people on to the board is urgent while retaining as much of the experience available as possible. There are so many useful and interesting projects to be completed and many hands make light work.

**Donal Lehane, John Galloway, Donal Murphy and Samantha Richardson** was elected on to the Planning & Corporate, Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committees and the Joint Policing Committee under the new local government, Public Participation Network structure.

**Samantha Richardson** was appointed marketing officer of Copper Coast Geopark Ltd in September. The post is funded by Waterford Council to promote and market the geopark facilities, activities and programmes. This is possibly an opportunity to produce an integrated marketing plan for Copper Coast Geopark including DFBA and implementing it.

**Redmond O'Donoghue** former chairman of Failte Ireland has become voluntary chairman of Ireland South East Experiences (I-SEE) established by DREL in collaboration with WIT and Harvey Travel. I-SEE is a community tourism network and is working in partnership with Failte Ireland. Its aim is to develop new more exciting tourism packages beyond current offerings in education, heritage, adventure, culture/ food and sport with major emphasis on community 'sense of place' involvement and the creation of new job opportunities.

**Senan Cooke** was appointed to the 'Commission for the Economic Development for Rural Areas' (CEDRA) which published its report in February of this year. Ann Phelan TD (Graigenamanagh) was subsequently appointed Minister for Rural Affairs in July to implement its recommendations. Recommendation 5 targets the 'regeneration of rural villages and small towns' as a priority issue and which is open to immediate implementation.

## **Visitors**

Increased interest in the Anne Valley Walkway and Fenor Playpark projects continues with visitor numbers growing. It is time to consider the completion of looped trail linking Fenor and Dunhill which was first presented to the DFBA AGM in 2012. There is a need to consolidate the progress made and maximise the economic and social benefits from the investment to date. Walkers recorded on the 3 kilometre Anne Valley Walkway and Wildlife Sanctuary has reached over 15,000 in six months while visitors to Fenor Play Park are very strong.

### **An 8 kilometre looped trail linking:**

- 3 villages of Dunhill Annestown and Fenor
- 2 seaside resorts, Annestown and Kilfarrassey
- Heritage sites, Dunhill Castle, Annestown Village, Fenor Bog and Fenor Playpark
- Sport and recreation, Anne Valley Angling Complex, Anne Valley Walkway
- Dunhill Ecopark, Dunhill GAA and Dunhill Village
- The linking of all the above and more would attract thousands of additional visitors and income. The area could be maintained litter free while creating further scope for enhancing and improving facilities. Increased footfall would allow for a more professional marketing focus and improve viability and sustainability of the businesses located on or near the trail including a number of DFBA social enterprise projects.

**52 visitors from Newfoundland** arrived in Dunhill on 25<sup>th</sup> August on a very wet morning. The weather cleared up shortly after the party had departed for St Mullins, Carlow. Fifteen visitors completed the Anne Valley Walk and visited the castle while the remainder sought refuge from the elements in the education centre. The party included the Mayor of Riverhead, Sheila Lee who paid membership fee to join Communities Creating Jobs. Other communities from Newfoundland and Labrador expressed interest in joining CCJ. Credit to Eamonn Murphy chairman of Ireland Newfoundland Connections (**INC**) and his committee for organising the visit.

**Valdosta University Georgia/ Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT)** referred a party of 30 students to Dunhill and Anne Valley in July. They completed the Anne Valley walkway and wildlife sanctuary and received an explanation of the development of DFBA/ Copper Coast in the education centre. Feedback was positive. A new opportunity has arisen for locals to train as tour guides and earn a fee for guided tours of Anne Valley and Copper Coast Geopark in the future. WIT has plans to expand its overseas student programme in 2015. Castle Café and Monksland Centre will benefit from providing refreshments, lunches and toilet facilities.

**A group from Cúil Aodha**, West Cork headed up by Peadar O Riada visited Dunhill Ecopark in July to consult with Dr Rory Harrington on the development of integrated constructed wetlands system.

**A party from Moate Co. Westmeath** visited the area on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November to study the developments that have been successfully completed. They were very satisfied with what they saw and heard.

**WIT** sent several groups of students and lecturers to visit the integrated constructed wetlands in ecopark and in Anne Valley.

**Many different groups** completed the Anne Valley walk including retirement parties, boy scouts/girl guides, disability groups, tourist groups, school parties and many others.



**Dr Rory Harrington** welcomed a party from the Municipality of POPOVO Bulgaria to Dunhill Ecopark on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October. The visitors were interested in learning about the implementation of the Leader Programme and the principles and practices involved in establishing the integrated constructed wetland systems. Over the years Rory has welcomed visitors from over 30 countries including China to the ecopark on study visits and international conferences organised in partnership with Office of Public Works, Co. Council, INTERREG and other bodies.

**Minister for Children James O'Reilly T.D.** launched the new Waterford Childcare Committee (amalgamation of city and county committees) on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> October in the education centre before a large attendance.

**Community Enterprise** tourism has great potential for Copper Coast area. There are so many interested groups from at home and overseas interested in community based education, environment, heritage, social, geology, ecology, artisan foods, creative arts, entertainment, hospitality and other developments as part of half and full day trips and longer. These include foreign students, elderly groups, youth groups, activity groups and general tourist groups. The new East-South Heritage and Culture branded project to be announced shortly has the Copper Coast as a key attraction. Increased interest in the area is almost certain to develop. **Are we ready for it?**

Given the amount and variety of visitor attractions in the greater Copper Coast area it should be possible to provide options on one day and half day tour options and attract coach tours to the area. A new generation of volunteers/ social / private enterprises are needed to manage this new opportunity and earn supplementary income streams. We need a coherent plan and promotion strategy.

*"There is no limit to what can be achieved by a community working together"*

### **Other Developments**

**Ireland's South East Emigrant Trails** is a pilot initiative established by Conan Power and Emily Shakespeare following the success of the Power Clan Gathering in 2013. The new initiative has had a successful first year. The sponsors are currently planning an expanded visitor programme for 2015.

**Copper Coast Geopark Study (July 2013)** funded by Leader Partnership was circulated. It is an up to date research study that can influence new developments in 2015

**Gleann Ealach Housing Project (2002) Committee** received welcome support from Waterford City & County Council, Minister Paudie Coffey T.D. and Department of ECLG on the completing of the 13 year old scheme in 2015/2016.

**A new 'Welcome to Dunhill Information Board'** was mounted on the Copper Coast Geopark Stand in Dunhill Village pointing out local places of interest to visitors. Credit to Paddy Lyons, Seamus Goggin and Calum Ryan

**Five representatives from DREL** were involved with a party of 15 people who travelled from Waterford to attend the final session of the Leader Inter-Territorial Project 2010-2014 held in Ballygally and Carnlough Northeast Antrim on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of September. Waterford Leader Partnership is planning participation in a second project beginning in 2015.

A new **Parish Youth Group** was organised in the parish by Donal Lehane recently. Twenty young people attended the inaugural meeting on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November

**Dunhill Rural Enterprises Ltd** is planning the development of a '**Regional Community Tourism Centre**' in the ecopark under Ireland South East Experiences (I-SEE). I-SEE includes representatives from the 5 Co Councils, WIT and Harvey Travel and is supported by Failte Ireland. Its aim is to expand visitor numbers to Copper Coast, Co Waterford and SE Region in the coming years. It will help consolidate and sustain local small businesses and create additional income for DREL.

**Croke Park GAA** has agreed to form an alliance with Dunhill Rural Enterprises Ltd/ Communities Creating Jobs and target the creation of 10 jobs per community by December 2020. The CCJ jobs model has borrowed from the learning involved in developing DFBA.

**Connect Ireland with the GAA and Communities Creating Jobs** have joined in forming a 3 party promotional plan to create jobs in rural (and urban) communities nationally.

**All sub groups affiliated to DFBA**, DREL, Fenor Bog, Playpark, Tidy Towns, Pre and After School Childcare, Dunhill Tidy Towns, Community Alert, Pre School, Dunhill-Fenor First Response, Dunhill Castle and Dunhill Community Hall have been very active throughout the year raising funds, maintaining facilities, improving services, and sustaining a supportive presence in the community.

A private Limerick based consultancy group **RDP** is organising a community enterprise based consortium involving Kilmallock Enterprise, Dunhill Rural Enterprises, Letterfrack Enterprise and Southill Development (inner Limerick City) as a pilot project on collaborative problem solving focused on the regeneration of deprived urban areas. It is applying for pilot funding to manage the project.

**Northern Ireland Rural Development Council (RDC)** – Teresa Canavan CEO has invited DREL/ Communities Creating Jobs to become an associate partner in an EU Rural Youth Entrepreneurship Programme under the EU Northern Periphery & Artic Programme (includes Finland and Greenland). The outcome of application will be known by mid 2015.

Special mention of **Eddie McCarthy** proprietor of Castle Cafe for his consistently high standard of customer care. He has made a serious contribution to the reputation and ambience of the education centre and its homely, welcoming atmosphere. Many visitors are quick to record their appreciation of the locally sourced food. The friendly face and quick wit puts visitors at ease. The café is an enjoyable feature of any visit to DFBA and Copper Coast area.

**The Ecopark Centre staff team** with DFBA project teams have earned a good reputation in welcoming visitors to the area. Feedback is very complimentary. GMIT (Galway – Mayo

Institute of Technology) use Fenor-Dunhill- Copper Coast Geopark projects as case study material in its Social Enterprise programme and are planning to take a coach load of adult students to the Copper Coast in 2015 led by Ivan McPhillips (Lecturer).

**DFBA and 12 sub groups** are members of a complete list of 59 voluntary groups operating in the DFBA community (see local business directory). A key operating principle is to add value and to neither duplicate work nor displace existing jobs. Long may this integrated, collaborative approach to development continue. The capacity of DFBA and sub groups to share a common vision and remain united in the face of difficulties is key to maximising progress in the future.

### **Acknowledgements:**

**A tribute to 3 people from outside the community** has been paid by DREL to acknowledge their significant contributions to the development of the ecopark. Three framed wall mountings are to be seen on the wall of the lobby in the centre.

1. Recently retired Canadian Ambassador to Ireland, Loyola Hearn who while in office worked hard to develop links between South-East and Newfoundland/ Labrador/ Canada. He visited DFBA area on numerous occasions (2010-2014) and helped, advised, encouraged enterprise, social and cultural linkages. He took a special interest in the ecopark, wetlands and walkway and he inspired the development of the Newfoundland Emigrant Commemorative Trees in the Anne Valley.
2. Eamonn de Buitlear who from 1990 to 2013 when he passed away supported Rory Harrington in his development and promotion of integrated constructed wetlands as an official means of disposing of effluent and waste water from farms and other locations of concentration such as the ecopark and Dunhill village. He championed the concept using his access to television and radio programmes to articulate the case in favour of acceptance.
3. Julian Walton historian in residence from 2006 has attracted many visitors and much good will to the ecopark centre. The constant stream of visitors including, colleagues and friends, fellow academics, researchers, attendees at winter lecture series highlighted the opportunity to establish a regional tourism centre in the ecopark in 2015.

**Over 200 volunteers** regularly contribute to the mix of DFBA projects. Thanks is due to those who run and support fund raising initiatives and those who provide spot prizes, materials, equipment and other resources.

**Ger Foley (Comerford and Foley)** for preparing the DREL and DREP accounts, to auditors John Meskill and Rachel Farrell for their advice and support, to the media for promoting our events and projects throughout the year and to the Parish Pastoral Council for including our

notices in the parish bulletin. To everyone who in any way contributed to the progress of DFBA and its network of developments in particular officers and management committees of sub groups.

**Guest Speakers-** thanks to Ms Samantha Richardson recently appointed marketing officer of Copper Coast Geopark Ltd for being willing to share her plans for 2015. To Paudie Coffey T.D Minister for Housing for outlining developments planned by his department and government that will impact on county, region and country in 2015.

**Waterford Leader Partnership Board,** Waterford Council, County Enterprise Board now Local Enterprise Office, Failte Ireland, Interreg, Irish Peatlands Conservation Council, Dublin City University, Waterford Institute of Technology, Geological Survey of Ireland, University College Cork, Dawn International, local directory advertisers, local papers in particular Kieran Foley Munster Express and others who helped in all sorts of ways to make 2014 a successful year for DFBA and its affiliates and associates.

**With austerity budgeting coming to an end** and the next programme of EU funding is coming on stream there is the expectation that support for DFBA projects will continue. While there is some hurt and anger remaining among the grass roots an air of cautious optimism is beginning to infiltrate the business community and community voluntary sectors. In the current challenging environment the contribution of the volunteer is more critical than ever. Everyone is required to remain on board and if possible encourage others to join. New members will bring new ideas, solutions, energy, and commitment to drive DFBA onwards and upwards.

**After 21 years as secretary** I am delighted to retire from the post of secretary. My replacement will bring a fresh approach to the development of DFBA. I hope to remain involved as a DREL representative on DFBA board. It has been a fulfilling experience to have been part of a team that managed the development of over 50 projects under the DFBA banner since 1993. The commitment of volunteers and staff carried the organisation through difficult times in particular in recent years.

**At this time** we should remember former colleagues who passed away and in their time were leading architects in shaping the DFBA project. These include Fr Purcell, John O'Mahony, Tim O'Brien, Heinz Pollimeir, Declan Comerford, Peter Murphy and Jim O'Hanlon. Many others, too numerous to mention also made valuable contributions through voluntary effort, financial support and access to network contacts who have also passed to their eternal reward.

**Ar dheis dé go raibh a n-anamacha.**

#### **DFBA Board of Directors 2014.**

**Chairman:** Donal Lehane (Community First Response) **Vice Chairman:** John Galloway (Annestown / Copper Coast Geopark) **Secretary:** Senan Cooke (Dunhill Rural Enterprises Ltd), **Asst Secretary:** Bernard Deegan (new director), **Treasurer:** Stan Flynn (Fenor Tidy Towns) Dan Cowman (Fenor Childcare) Pat Greene (Fenor Bog) John Hayes (Fenor Play Park) Wally O'Neill (Dunhill Childcare) Donal O'Brien (Boatstrand Group) Willie Moore

(Dunhill Rural Enterprises Ltd) Marie Dolan (new director), Donal Murphy (Dunhill Community Hall/ Dunhill Community Alert)

**DFBA 2014 Affiliates (12) include:** Fenor Bog, Playpark, Tidy Towns, Pre and After School Childcare, Dunhill-Fenor First Response, Rural Enterprises Ltd, Dunhill Castle, Dunhill Community Hall, Tidy Towns, Community Alert, Pre School Childcare and Annestown-Boatstrand Group.

**DFBA 2014 Associates (7) include:** Copper Coast Geopark, Dunhill Multi-Education Centre, Anne Valley Wetlands, Anne Valley Walkway & Wildlife Sanctuary, Dunhill Village Wetlands and Nature Park, Gleann Ealach Housing and Communities Creating Jobs (CCJ)

### **Recommendations**

- (1) Complete looped walking trail from Annestown to Fenor to Dunhill and increase business activity for social and private enterprises on or near the walkway.
- (2) Establish a DFBA network to facilitate a regular flow of information
- (3) Develop DFBA website and maintain it.

**A word of thanks** to Fenor Christmas Sale of Work Committee for covering the cost of binding this report.

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Senan Cooke,  
Secretary.  
4<sup>th</sup> December 2014.